

Public Comment of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York to the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations (NAC)

Subject: 2021 NAC Spring Virtual Meeting Public Comment

Submitted by email to shana.j.banks@census.gov

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) is an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. For over 75 years, CCC has documented the facts, engaged and mobilized New Yorkers, and advocated for solutions to make New York City a better place for children and their families.

Core to this mission is the collection and analysis of public data on children and families, especially from sources like the U.S. Census Bureau. CCC has made use of multiple Census Bureau products over many years, including decennial census counts, the American Community Survey, and more recently the experimental Household Pulse Survey.

Over the past year, the Household Pulse Survey has offered a critical tool for measuring and assessing the impact of COVID-19 across the country. CCC has monitored the development and release of Household Pulse data consistently, and is deeply grateful to the Census Bureau and its partner agencies for producing this survey in such a timely fashion, without significant compromises to the quality and scope of data collection. The survey and resulting data have remained a vital source of information on the urgent and ongoing needs of households, which we use to educate the public, share with local service providers, and advocate for policy solutions from government.

Last fall, CCC released a thorough analysis of microdata from the Public Use Files (PUF) covering Phase I (April 23 to July 21, 2020) in the New York Metro Area, and we continue to download and interpret data from subsequent phases into 2021.¹

In particular, we find the following survey items of great relevance to our work, and want to stress the importance of retaining these items as long as the Household Pulse Survey continues:

- Work status (Q11) and the main reason for not working for pay or for profit (Q13)
- Difficulty paying for usual household expenses (Q19a), and source of income to meet usual spending needs (Q20)
- Food sufficiency (Q24), children's food insecurity (Q24a), and receipt and source of free meals/groceries (Q26, Q27)
- The GAD-2 and PHQ-2 from the NHIS (Q32 through Q35), and the access and receipt of behavioral health support (Q38a through Q38c)
- Rental arrears (Q40b) and the likelihood of eviction (Q41a)

¹ The complete analysis from Phase I can be viewed and downloaded here: <https://cccnewyork.org/keeping-track-of-child-and-family-well-being-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic/>. More recently, data collected through Phase II (August 19 - October 26, 2020) featured in CCC's annual publication *Child and Family Well-being in NYC*, available at: <https://cccnewyork.org/data-publications/child-family-well-being-in-new-york-city-2021/>.

- Live contact with teachers (Q47a)

We are encouraged by the more recent additions and revisions to the survey that went into the field on April 14, including items on preventive health visits among children, school-based food assistance, and child care and daycare access. We urge the Census Bureau to go further to capture the circumstances of households with children. Our own analysis of Household Pulse Survey data suggests that households with children are experiencing extensive and multiple risks to their well-being, demanding a deeper exploration of the conditions facing households with children.

Specifically, the Household Pulse Survey can better serve the data needs of our organization, along with our partners in New York City, by gathering more information on children under 18 years old. We echo comments submitted by Deborah Stein from the Partnership for America's Children, that the survey would benefit from: collecting and providing more detailed age groups for children in the household (e.g. 0 to 4 years, 5 to 12 years, 13 to 17 years); asking about the mental health needs and services received by children under 18; and asking about temporary housing status.

Further, we urge consideration for inclusion of survey items with respect to the following areas:

- Receipt and use of stimulus (Economic Impact Payment) checks (i.e. re-introduce instrument Q15 from earlier phases)
- Receipt and use of monthly child care tax credit payments (starting July 15, 2021)
- To complement instrument Q38d (children missed or delayed preventive check-ups): for households reporting yes, what types of visits were missed, and has the child has caught up on these services/visits?
- To complement instrument QTH2 (children's use of telehealth / telemedicine): does the householder plan for their child to continue seeing a doctor, nurse, or other health professional by video or by phone?

The Household Pulse Survey continues to serve our work as a key source of up-to-date information on households with children during this pandemic, and we believe these developments would further enhance the product and our own use of the resulting data.

Thank you for inviting public comment on these important matters, we appreciate your consideration for our input.

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